IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended) A process for the production of nitric acid with a concentration of 50 to 76% from ammonia and oxygen-bearing gas under pressure, using the mono or dual pressure process, wherein

tail gas is expanded wherein the expansion ~~of tail gas~~ takes place in at least two pressure steps, thereby converting the heat of the gas to energy by means of gas turbines operating at different pressure,

~~the said configuration provides for~~ a device is provided ~~arranged~~ between every two gas turbines and heats ~~each pair of expansion units and intended for heating~~ the expanded tail gas to a temperature of >450°C, the ~~said~~ system exploiting the waste heat from the nitric acid production process.

Claim 2 (previously presented) The process according to claim 1, comprising a gas inlet temperature of 500 to 600°C, for the expansion steps, thereby supplying drive energy to further consumers.

Claim 3 (previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the surplus drive energy is provided to ~~for~~ a generator in order to produce electric power.

Claim 4 (currently amended) The process according to claim 3, wherein a motor-generator set is ~~used as the output of said machine~~ provided which is sufficient to ensure the compression drive at the plant startup.

Claim 5 (previously presented) The process according to claim 2, wherein the gas inlet temperature is 535°C for the expansion steps.